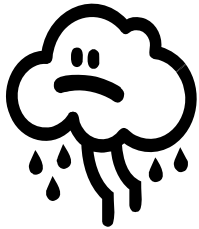


Department of Human Services

Articles in Today's Clips Wednesday, October 4, 2006

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Prepared by the
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Family sues in boy's death at a foster home

Father says goal is to close agency

BY JACK KRESNAK

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

October 4, 2006

The family of a 2-year-old boy beaten to death in a Detroit foster home in August has filed a federal lawsuit against the Lula Belle Stewart Center, the private foster care agency that licensed the home and was responsible for monitoring it.

The lawsuit, which was filed Monday, also names several of the center's employees and asks for damages in excess of \$25,000. But Isaac Lethbridge's biological father said its purpose is not for the family to collect money but to put the center out of business.

"We want to make sure that this agency never has the responsibility of taking care of children again," Matt Lethbridge said Tuesday. "We're not suing the Department of Human Services because there's enough money taken out of the system already. The last thing they need is more money taken away because of the incompetency of these people."

Isaac died Aug. 16 after being beaten by someone in the Detroit home of licensed foster parent Charlise Adams-Rogers. At least nine people were inside the home at the time, but no one has yet been charged. Detroit police are investigating.

The state Department of Human Services suspended the center's license to place children in foster homes on Aug. 22 and is seeking to permanently revoke its privileges.

The center placed Isaac in Adams-Rogers' home in June even though the home has only three bedrooms and Adams-Rogers was already caring for two 16-year-old female foster children and her two adopted children, ages 12 and 18. Isaac's 4-year-old sister was also a foster child in the home.

Both the center's executive director and attorney were out of the country and unavailable to comment on the lawsuit Tuesday.

Ernestine Moore, a retired professor of social work and lawyer assisting the Stewart Center, said Tuesday that officials and employees have been told not to comment because of pending litigation.

Adams-Rogers' attorney, Marc Shreeman, has said his client passed a police-administered lie detector test that showed she did not know how Isaac was injured. Shreeman said neither he nor his client could comment on the lawsuit.



Isaac Lethbridge, 2, died Aug. 16. Detroit police are investigating.

The lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court by attorney Lloyd Johnson, who works for Geoffrey Fieger's law firm. It was assigned to U.S. District Judge Lawrence Zatkoff.

According to state records reviewed by the Free Press and the lawsuit, Isaac and his sister had been in a previous Stewart Center foster home where she somehow contracted Hepatitis B. The disease frequently is transmitted sexually. But an examination of the girl by a pediatrician a week after her brother was killed was unable to confirm that she had been sexually assaulted, Lethbridge said.

Lethbridge said, however, that the exam of his daughter showed numerous fresh and old bruises, as well as several marks the doctor described as being cigarette burns.

Contact **JACK KRESNAK** at 313-223-4544 or jkresnak@freepress.com.

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Published October 4, 2006

2nd inmate says Holland confessed

Mom said she hit Ricky due to his 'whining,' woman testifies

By Kevin Grasha
Lansing State Journal

What's next

- Lisa Holland's trial continues today before Ingham County Circuit Judge Paula Manderfield.
- Prosecutors are expected to play video of several hours of Lisa Holland's Jan. 26 interview with detectives, during which she said her husband might have strangled or suffocated Ricky.

A second Ingham County Jail inmate testified Tuesday that Lisa Holland confessed to killing her 7-year-old adopted son, Ricky.

Crystal Mountain said Holland told her in early February that she hit Ricky in the head with a hammer because "he was whining."

"Lisa said she was sorry, that she did not mean to hit him as hard as she did," Mountain testified. Holland told her the incident happened near Ricky's bedroom.

Mountain's testimony came one day after another former jail inmate said Holland told her last spring that Ricky made her angry, so she threw a hammer at the boy's head and then struck him again.

Lisa Holland is charged with murder and child abuse in Ricky's July 2005 death. Her husband, Tim Holland, has pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and is expected to testify against her Thursday. The trial is in its third week.

Mountain, who has been convicted of prostitution, theft and drug use, admitted stealing documents from Lisa Holland's cell, which included a police report summarizing statements from Tim Holland.

But she testified she never read the documents and minutes later reported the theft to a jail guard.

Mountain was jailed for prostitution a few days before the Hollands' were arrested in January on obstruction of justice charges related to Ricky's disappearance and death.

When Assistant Prosecutor Mike Ferency asked Mountain why she talked to police about Lisa Holland's confession, Mountain said she at first hesitated. But knowing what happened became too much to hold inside.

"I couldn't eat, couldn't sleep," she said, as several jurors appeared to study Lisa Holland. "I couldn't keep it."

Mountain also described Lisa Holland's anger toward her husband, who led authorities to Ricky's remains Jan. 27, nearly seven months after the boy was reported missing.

She said Lisa Holland told her "that it's all his fault we're in this mess."

Also Tuesday, Lisa Holland's co-counsel Andrew Abood focused on how Tim Holland lied to investigators several times in the case.

Abood brought up how Tim Holland's attorney earlier this year agreed in court that his client's Jan. 27 statement to police was not truthful. On that day, Tim Holland told authorities Lisa killed Ricky by striking him with a hammer.

Contact Kevin Grasha at 267-1347 or kgrasha@lsj.com.

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October 4, 2006

Dead tot's mom flees drug rehab

She leaves recovery house after learning foster mother is charged with 2-year-old's murder.

Iveory Perkins / The Detroit News

CANTON TOWNSHIP -- The biological mother of a 2-year-old girl who died of blunt trauma fled a drug recovery house Monday after learning the toddler's foster mother was charged with her murder.

Now, family and rehab workers fear she is on a crack binge or dead.

Anne Marie Hirsch, 26, was making another effort to kick her five-year habit and seemed committed to regaining custody of her daughter, Allison Newman, family members said. Her outlook changed after she buried the brown-eyed girl Friday, said her father, Craig Hirsch.

"At the funeral she had a rude awakening and she showed a lot of remorse," said Hirsch, 64, a Canton mechanic. "Anne has been suicidal, but I am hoping that we don't have another funeral to go to."

The fears arise as more details emerge in the sad case.

In foster care three months after her birth because both biological parents are drug addicts, Allison was placed by Lutheran Social Services this summer with Alan and Carol Poole. On Sept. 22, Carol called 911 from her \$320,000 house to report the child wasn't breathing and injured her head the previous day.

Monday, Wayne County Prosecutor Kym L. Worthy charged Carol Poole with felony murder, involuntary manslaughter and first-degree child abuse. Alan Poole was out of town at the time of the death and faces no charges.

The announcement prompted Anne Hirsch to walk away from Stanford House, a 12-step program for women drug users, her father said. She didn't return after she was let out on a pass to visit a nearby library, said Val Davis, director of the facility.

"She was excited about the new treatment plan at Stanford House," Davis said. "Her behavior worsened after leaving the hospital with Allison. She was very hopeless and immediately she became in denial of her drug disease."

Anne Hirsch, who always wears her hair in a ponytail, was dressed in a dark overcoat, a red and white striped shirt, blue jeans, and brownish black ankle boots the day she left the recovery house.

Craig Hirsch said a warrant could be issued for her arrest if she doesn't return to Stanford because she is to appear in the 35th District Court today on domestic abuse charges for allegedly punching him in the face.

Allison isn't the first child Anne has lost; she has a 7-year-old daughter who was taken from her by the father's family, said Melissa delaGarza, Anne's aunt.

"It hurts that we never got a chance to get to know (Allison), delaGarza said. "The hope was that with Allison she would get her life back together and make a home for her daughter. Now that is gone and she may not have the motivation she once had."

You can reach Iveory Perkins at (734) 462-2672 or iveory.perkins@detnews.com.

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Prickett pleads guilty in baby's death

Tuesday, October 3, 2006 10:19 AM EDT

CASSOPOLIS - Cass County Prosecutor Victor Fitz announced that Dowagiac resident Matthew Lee Prickett, 26, pleaded guilty as charged Monday afternoon to the 15-year felony of involuntary manslaughter.

The charge arose from the July 27, 2006, drowning death of the defendant's 9-month-old son, Matthew James Prickett.

The involuntary manslaughter criminal information document filed in this matter indicated that on Thursday, July 27, the defendant was grossly negligent while responsible for monitoring and bathing his 9-month-old baby.

The incident took place at the defendant's 107 Sheldon St. residence.

The case was investigated by the Dowagiac Police Department.

At the time of his guilty plea, Matthew Lee Prickett admitted leaving his son alone in the bathtub while he attended to other matters in the house.

As a result of the plea to the primary charge, the prosecutor's office agreed to dismiss a two-year felony of child abuse fourth-degree and not to pursue any other charges arising from this incident.

Sentencing has been scheduled for 8:30 a.m. Nov. 3 before Cass County Circuit Judge Michael E. Dodge.

Musselman found not competent for trial

By Rick Charmoli, Cadillac News

LAKE CITY - The mother accused of shooting and killing her 7-year-old daughter will not face trial immediately.

Amy Sue Musselman, 31, of Lake Township in Missaukee County was arraigned on open murder and felony firearm charges last month. Missaukee County Prosecutor William Donnelly said a hearing held Monday in 84th District Court determined she was not competent to stand trial at this time.

"This is only an initial evaluation. At this time the psychiatrist at the Center for Forensic Psychiatry has determined that she is unable to assist in the defense of these charges," he said. "She will be administered a course of treatment at the center that is expected to render her able to stand trial."

The CFP is located in Ypsilanti. Musselman will be transferred from Munson Medical Center in Traverse City to the facility in the near future, Donnelly said.

It is not known how long she will be treated at the center.

"Because of the nature of the charges and the fact she has no bond, her liberty will be restricted to the building and grounds of the facility providing treatment," he said.

She faces up to life in prison on the open murder charge if convicted.

"The matter is progressing and the law is protecting society and the law is protecting her rights - as it should," he said.

rcharmoli@cadillacnews.com | 775-NEWS (6397)



Parents warned about 'predator'

Wednesday, October 04, 2006

By Juanita Westaby

The Grand Rapids Press

PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP -- Frustrated by release of an alleged sexual predator back into the community, the Northview School Public Schools superintendent sent warning letters home to parents Tuesday.

The letter was about a 19-year-old man described by Superintendent Michael Stearns as "an aggressive sexual predator and pedophile."

While some authorities said the letter may have gone too far, at least one Northview parent said it didn't go far enough.

"It was just enough information to freak a parent out," said Nancy Rhodes, who has 7- and 10-year-old children at schools in the district.

"When I saw this, it was unspecific enough to scare a parent. And you don't know who to turn to and who to look for."

The man, who was reportedly released from a local mental facility, has no criminal sexual conduct record, Kent County Prosecutor William Forsyth said. He added that a psychological evaluation on the man, however, "was disturbing."

Forsyth believed it did not warrant the same treatment serial rapist David Siebers got when released from prison in 2002, when he warned police agencies and school districts about Siebers.

"This, from what I gather, is completely different," he said.

Stearns stands by his decision to alert parents, a move backed by Board of Education President Michael Dood.

"We made a decision on the side of safety for the school district," Doods said.

Stearns said he was alerted to the man's presence by a worker with one of the agencies involved and by a document on the man's behavior.

Community Mental Health, the court system, Michigan Department of Human Services and local police have not provided "a workable solution to protect the safety of our children," Stearns said.

"They simply placed him in our community."

Federal health privacy laws prohibit Community Mental Health from saying whether the man was in treatment, said Richard Evans, an agency spokesman.

The Kent County Sheriff's Department "will be looking into this further to better understand the possibility of a threat and the possible known address where this person is living," Lt. Roger Parent, a departmental spokesman, said.

Stearns said he put student safety first, believing the best action was to go public when he felt the only

information he was getting were "sketchy" details.

"All I can do is raise a red flag and tell parents to keep their children safe," he said.

"I may have broken some laws here. But if I save one child from being hurt, it's worth it. I did what I felt was right."

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KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

Man gets prison for sexual assault

Wednesday, October 04, 2006

By Rod Smith

Special to the Gazette

PAW PAW -- A Pullman man has been sentenced to prison for the sexual assault of a 10-year-old girl.

Van Buren County Circuit Judge William Buhl sentenced Aurelio Yanez, 56, to 30 months to 15 years in prison for third-degree criminal sexual conduct involving force or coercion.

The victim told Michigan State Police that Yanez had started making sexual comments to her. He grabbed her from behind, according to the police report, and then dragged her into a bedroom where he sexually assaulted her.

The incident happened in April or May of 2000 in Geneva Township when the girl was 10, according to the report. Yanez pleaded guilty Sept. 8 to the incident.

In other sentencings:

Craig Alan Baker, 45, of Paw Paw, was sentenced to 330 days in jail for obtaining a controlled substance -- oxycodone -- by fraud. Baker pleaded guilty July 28 to an April 10 incident in Paw Paw.

William Steven Traxler, 36, of Las Vegas, was sentenced to 330 days in jail with credit for 20 days served, three years of probation and payment of a \$500 fine and \$425 in costs for operating a vehicle while intoxicated. Traxler pleaded guilty Aug. 18 to a May 20 incident in Lawrence Township.

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Wednesday, October 04, 2006



• Palmer

Wayne County

Man charged in online solicitation of teen girl

A 25-year-old Milan man faces up to 20 years in prison for allegedly using a computer to solicit sex online from a 14-year-old girl. Brian Palmer was arraigned Monday and faces up to 20 years in prison stemming from seven counts of illegal computer use and sexually abusive behavior toward a child. Wayne County Sheriff Warren Evans said Palmer wanted the girl, who was an undercover deputy, to go to Chicago with him for a weekend to see a concert, do drugs and have sex.



THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

Area man on wanted list for sex offenders

Scott Bedolla has failed to register his address with state

Wednesday, October 04, 2006

BY SUSAN L. OPPAT

News Staff Reporter

A Washtenaw County man convicted of sexually assaulting a child has made Michigan's first top-10 list of most-wanted sex offenders for failing to provide his address to the sex offender registry.

Scott Anthony Bedolla, 40, was convicted in Detroit in 1997 of second-degree criminal sexual conduct for contact with a 13-year-old girl. He also is listed on a state Web site as an absconder from probation on a 2002 larceny conviction.

State Police Trooper Eric Byerly believes Bedolla is in the Ypsilanti area, and has a girlfriend in Saline. Bedolla is one of nearly 40,000 people on the Michigan Sex Offender Registry, which lists only those convicted since 1994.

One other man from Washtenaw County who is on the first most-wanted list, created in the past month, is cited as having a Whitmore Lake address in 1995, the last time he registered. But Ricky Wayne Tyree, now 28, spent three years in the Maxey Boys Training School in Green Oak Township from 1995-1998. He was there as a juvenile on a first-degree criminal sexual conduct conviction, for an assault on a child 13 or younger in Genesee County.

Tyree had to register when he got to Maxey, but has not registered since then, said Detective Sgt. Sean Furlong, from the State Police Brighton post.

State Police Detective Sgt. Kyle McPhee said Tuesday that he believes Tyree is in Tennessee. But what happened with Tyree will no longer be allowed under a state law signed last week, McPhee said.

On Jan. 1, 2007, all prisons, jails and juvenile facilities will require an address from every convicted sex offender before they are released.

McPhee compiles the most-wanted list from the registry of all convicted sex offenders who fail to verify their addresses after they are convicted of a sex assault felony. He said he especially includes on the top-10 list those who victimized a child and whom police have not been able to find.

McPhee said he hopes other Michigan police agencies will submit the names of offenders who should go on the most-wanted list as it becomes more well known.

Michigan had 39,478 offenders on its registry Aug. 4. Of those, 2,392 were juveniles, and 13,205 were incarcerated.

Only 19,001 of the offenders are listed on the registry available to the public. The public registry excludes offenders who have moved out of state, are incarcerated, have a known false address or are juveniles.

Felony sex offenders must register their addresses with local police every three months. Misdemeanor offenders must register annually. Failure to register is a four-year felony.

According to the State Police, the registry has a compliance rate of about 65 percent.

Washtenaw County has 436 sex offenders on the public registry.

Troopers in Ypsilanti are also looking for several who are not on the most-wanted list. They include Antoine Laurent Edja, 21, who might be out of state, and Quintrell D. Willis, 27, who might be in the Ann Arbor area.

Anyone with information about any of the wanted men can call state police at 734-482-1211.

Susan Oppat can be reached at soppat@annarbornews.com or at 734-482-1166.

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ClickOnDetroit.com

Granholm, DeVos Test Each Other In First Debate

POSTED: 7:26 am EDT October 3, 2006
UPDATED: 11:10 am EDT October 3, 2006

Gubernatorial candidates Jennifer Granholm and Dick DeVos spent their first debate answering tough questions on how they'd fix the state's economic woes and where they stand on social issues such as abortion and embryonic stem cell research.

But it was over children and the elderly that the two got into a protracted debate Monday about protecting the vulnerable.

Asked if Granholm was responsible for corrections employees mistakenly releasing Patrick Selepak from prison, setting him free to go on a February crime spree that left three dead, DeVos said she hadn't done enough to protect Michigan citizens.

He also cited the death of Ricky Holland, a 7-year-old Williamston boy whose adoptive mother is on trial for his death last summer.

"In the world of government and in the world of corrections and in the world of child care, when bad things happen, people can lose their lives," DeVos said. "This is a question of leadership in having the right people in place."

Granholm said she ordered the corrections employees who released Selepak fired and overhauled the Corrections Department. Although she said the Holland case couldn't be discussed in depth because of the ongoing trial, she noted that changes had been made at the Department of Human Services, including the hiring this year of more child protection workers.

The Democratic governor then criticized her Republican opponent for owning stock in a nursing home company, Alterra Healthcare Corp., that she said has been cited for allowing its elderly residents to be abused.

She said the multimillionaire businessman didn't disclose in the list of investments he released earlier this year that he owned 12 million shares of the company, which has since been merged into another entity.

"He didn't want us to know about that ... perhaps because he didn't want us to know about the physical and sexual abuse of those Alzheimer's patients," Granholm said.

DeVos said he owned less than 1 percent of the publicly held company and didn't know of the abuse until recently.

"It was a tragic, tragic situation. It turned out to be a very, very bad investment as well," he said. His campaign issued a release afterward saying that members of the DeVos family were investors in Alterra for several years.

DeVos sold the shares at a loss when the company went bankrupt, DeVos campaign spokesman John Truscott said after the debate.

According to a statement from the DeVos campaign, "this investment is just one of many made on a routine basis through RDV Corp.," the Grand Rapids company making investments for Dick DeVos, his siblings and his parents, Helen and Richard DeVos Sr., co-founder of Amway Corp.

Michigan Democratic Chairman Mark Brewer said after the debate, however, that DeVos controlled Alterra not just through stock ownership, but by loaning the company nearly \$200 million and getting in exchange changes in the company bylaws that allowed the DeVoses to appoint four of the corporation's nine directors.

Among those directors appointed was Jerry Tubergen, president and CEO of RDV Corp.

It was "very cleverly done," Brewer said. "It wasn't (controlled) through the stock ... but it was control nonetheless."

Truscott denied that there were any special provisions.

"Dick was never involved in any management decisions in this company," he said.

Brewer planned to hold news conferences Tuesday to release further details about Alterra.

Granholm and DeVos also focused on the economy and what they would do to turn it around.

"A governor's responsible for setting an atmosphere on what happens in this state," DeVos said. "The atmosphere is clearly not here for job creation."

Granholm said her administration is working to train more workers, raise educational standards and invest in new, cutting-edge businesses.

"We are investing more than any other state in the country in diversifying our economy," she said. "I'm fighting for everyday citizens."

DeVos said he opposed abortion except to save the mother's life and opposed embryonic stem cell research, although he supports research on adult stem cells. He chided Granholm for vetoing a bill aimed ending a late-term abortion procedure that opponents call partial-birth abortion.

Granholm said DeVos is far more conservative than most Michigan voters on the issues of abortion and stem cell research. She said she vetoed the abortion bill because it was unconstitutional, since it didn't provide an exception to protect the mother's health.

Erika King, a political science professor at Grand Valley State University, said both DeVos and Granholm seemed to do what they set out to accomplish in the debate.

"He kept talking about leadership and the need for leadership and the need for change," King said. "She did a better job at more specifically letting it be known what her proposals were."

King added that she wasn't sure the debate would sway undecided voters to one camp or the other. But she added it would make more people start thinking about the campaign and the candidates.

Monday's debate was the first of three debates the two candidates will have this month. The hourlong debate took place at the WKAR-TV studios at Michigan State University and was set up to be the most freewheeling of the three.

Tim Skubick, host of public TV's "Off the Record" program, and political reporter Charlie Cain of The Detroit News questioned the candidates.

The debate was made available for live broadcast on all public television and Fox stations around the state, as well as WILX-TV in Lansing. It also could be heard live on WKAR Radio.

No third-party candidates were invited to any of the three debates. Green Party candidate Douglas Campbell showed up at the WKAR studios Monday evening even though he wasn't allowed to participate.

Campbell was not allowed into the studio section of the Communication Arts building but was allowed to hand out his press releases. Other third-party candidates not invited were Bhagwan Dashairya of the U.S. Taxpayers Party and Gregory Creswell of the Libertarian Party.

The second debate between DeVos and Granholm will be held at 8 p.m. Oct. 10 in Grand Rapids.

It will be broadcast on Local 4. The third will be held at 8 p.m. Oct. 16.

The candidates also will have a joint appearance at an Oct. 12 luncheon before the Detroit Economic Club.

Each will get 15 minutes to speak.

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Child support may cost game licenses

Friend of Court can force parents from woods, lakes

BY DAN CORTEZ
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

October 4, 2006

If you can't hunt down the money to make child support payments in Macomb County -- or at least the time to make an effort -- you won't have the right to hunt down animals.

The Friend of the Court has begun revoking the hunting, fishing and sporting licenses of child support absconders who are at least two months behind in their payments and have not met with court officials to set up a payment plan.

The court oversees 40,000 child support cases and estimates about 9,000 of the parties involved have hunting or sporting licenses. An estimated 20% of those possessing one of those licenses have not been making regular payments and could lose those privileges.

Lynn Davidson, director of the Macomb County Friend of the Court, said the new program will not punish hunters who are simply behind on their payments. Instead, the program is meant to pursue people who have not been in communication with the court or made any effort to make child support payments or set up a payment plan.

"It's not going to be taking action if people are making payments," Davidson said. "I'm hoping that, by threatening to revoke or suspend a license, that will spur their attention."

Friend of the Court offices in several counties -- including Wayne and Oakland -- have similar programs.

Suzanne Hollyer, director of the Oakland County Friend of the Court, said her office goes after hunters in the fall and is able to collect about \$100,000 in delinquent payments quickly without much enforcement effort.

"This is a great tool," Hollyer said. "We do it every year. This is the time of the year that we focus on it."

The Macomb court will get a list from the state Department of Natural Resources of those with a hunting license. The Friend of the Court will compare that list to those who are not making any effort to pay child support.

"I'm hoping we'll get a good response," Davidson said. "I'm hoping it will bring people in to talk to their judicial officers and get a pattern going where we'll get a regular pattern of people coming in."

Davidson said her office also will suspend or revoke the off-road-vehicle licenses of those who aren't making their payments.

*Those who are behind on child support can call Friend of the Court, 8 to 5 weekdays, at 586-469-5160. Contact **DAN CORTEZ** at 586-469-1827 or dcortez@freepress.com.*

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October 4, 2006

Deadbeat hunters grounded

Macomb County officials will withhold sporting licenses from those who fail to pay child support.

Jim Lynch / The Detroit News

MOUNT CLEMENS -- If you can afford the camouflage, the rifle, the ammo and the time off to hunt, Macomb County officials believe you can afford to pay your child support.

For the first time, Macomb's Friend of the Court office is taking advantage of a state law that allows the county to revoke the sporting license of residents who are in arrears on child support payments.

Licenses for hunting, fishing and even off-road vehicles can be pulled for those with outstanding payments.

The authority to revoke a sporting license comes from a 1982 Michigan law that many other counties have already implemented, but it's unclear how many permits have been yanked statewide.

A review in 2003 showed that half of the state's counties revoked sporting licenses, but those numbers are likely incomplete, said Marcia McBrien, information officer for the state Supreme Court.

Lynn Davidson, who heads the Macomb County Friend of the Court office, said the target of the new initiative is not parents who have just recently fallen behind on payments, but those who have repeatedly demonstrated an unwillingness to follow through on their commitments.

"Counties have the ability to go after a person's professional license or their driver's licenses," Davidson said. "But judges in Macomb County have been reluctant to pull driver's licenses because it may interfere with a parent's ability to earn a living and pay their support requirements."

In Metro Detroit, Oakland County has used sporting licenses as a prod for payments.

"For us it's been extremely successful," said Suzanne Hollyer, director of Oakland's Friend of the Court office. "The sporting licenses generate about \$100,000 in (child support) payments a year."

Livingston County officials hope to begin using the threat of revoked sporting licenses this year. But a new statewide computer system for Friend of the Court offices has made cross-referencing databases easier and more efficient.

"Sometimes suspending (professional or driver's) licenses isn't beneficial," said Melissa Scharrer, who heads the Livingston office. "But this is something that's cultural something they like to do."

Paul Bachor, president of the North Macomb Sportsmen's Club, said he supports the philosophy behind Macomb's new initiative and doesn't believe it singles out hunters.

"It seems to be all-inclusive since it extends to fishing and off-road vehicles as well," said Bachor, .

He is concerned, however, that the effort will result in fewer hunters applying for permits, thus reducing revenue to the state Department of Natural Resources.

You can reach Jim Lynch at (586) 468-0520 or jlynch@detnews.com.

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Hunting, fishing licenses to be yanked from deadbeat parents

Macomb court takes advantage of seldom-used state law

PUBLISHED: October 4, 2006

By Jameson Cook
Macomb Daily Staff Writer

As hunting season descends upon the county and state, the Macomb County Friend of the Court will start cracking down on deadbeat parents by revoking or suspending their licenses to hunt, fish and operate an off-road vehicle.

"This is about the kids," said Lynn Davidson, Friend of the Court director. "It costs money to hunt. It costs money to have an ORV. If they (deadbeat parents) can have their toys, they can pay their child support."

Friend of the Court staffers, working with the state Department of Natural Resources, this week will start sifting through the 8,900 men and women who pay child support and have any type of sporting license in Michigan. They will target those who are at least two months in arrears and have failed to make payment arrangements. Davidson promised "we won't touch" those who are making payments and aren't more than two months behind.

Davidson acknowledged that some sportsmen may be upset with the effort, but said she wants to provide positive encouragement for those who are not even trying to keep up with payments.

"We're using this as a carrot instead of a stick," Davidson said. "If they come in and make arrangements, they can keep their license. This is about getting money to family and children."

In all, about 40,000 people pay child support in Macomb County.

Officials estimate that approximately 10 to 20 percent of the 8,900 people with licenses could be affected. Davidson said enforcement

director Tom Blohm and his staff initially will focus on the worst offenders.

Davidson agreed that most of the offenders will be men but added that "we have women, too" who will be affected.

The program isn't new, as it is practiced in other states, and the law has been on the books in Michigan for a several years. But Davidson she believes only a few counties in Michigan have taken advantage of it.

She said her office has been aware of it for some time but she and staffers haven't pursued it due to other priorities. But with other projects completed, such as converting its filing system from paper to imaging, the staff has more time to start this new program.

Davidson said targeted persons will be sent a letter and given a chance to comply or fight the renovation in Family Court of Macomb Circuit Court.

Bow hunting for deer, and bow and shotgun hunting for turkey started this week, and duck hunting starts this weekend.

For many of the most common hunting and fishing licenses, the fee is \$15. Fishing licenses that include trout and salmon are \$28.

Friend of the Court offices in Macomb and throughout Michigan in recent years have heightened efforts to crack down on those who fail to pay child support, charging the most egregious offenders with felonies.

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Man gets 40 to 60 years in prison for kidnapping and raping wife

Tuesday, October 03, 2006

By Cedric Ricks

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A Kalamazoo Township man was sentenced Monday to 40 to 60 years in prison for kidnapping and raping his estranged wife.

Marvin Scott Horn, 39, was convicted by a jury in July of one count of kidnapping and four counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct. Kalamazoo County Circuit Judge Richard Ryan Lamb sentenced him to concurrent prison terms of 40 to 60 years on each count.

The victim testified that after she met Horn for dinner at a Portage restaurant on Jan. 27, he lured her out to his truck, where he grabbed her by the throat, wrapped her in duct tape and tied her wrists and ankles. He drove her to a home on Reed Avenue in Kalamazoo, forced her into a room and repeatedly raped her that night and the next morning, she said.

Horn countered that the two had a night of consensual sex that included acts of bondage. He did not comment at his sentencing.

Assistant prosecuting attorney Frank Machnik said Horn was obsessed with his estranged wife and just days before kidnapping and raping her had been sentenced for a felony assault conviction involving Horn's wife. Then, while jailed on the kidnapping and rape charges, Horn tried to arrange to have her killed, the prosecutor said. Horn was later convicted of attempted solicitation of murder and sentenced to 20 months to 7 1/2 years in prison.

Horn's attorney, Gary Giguere Jr., asked the judge to consider a prison term at the low end of sentencing guidelines, which called for the low end of his sentence range to be set at between 14 years, three months to 29 years, eight months behind bars.

Machnik urged Lamb to exceed guidelines in sentencing and read from a pre-sentence report prepared by Michigan Department of Corrections officials that expressed concern about the safety of Horn's victim.

Horn ``has never taken responsibility for his actions," the prosecutor said. ``He has basically blamed (his estranged wife) for his actions here."

Machnik said Horn's estranged wife, who was married to him for 17 years and had two children with him, wanted to try to maintain a relationship with Horn, who still was supporting their children.

Lamb, in exceeding the sentencing guidelines, said there was no explanation as to why the victim would consent to bondage that included use of duct tape that ripped out huge chunks of her hair. ``The jury heard the evidence, and, in my view, their verdict was more than amply supported," he said.



Immigrant's trial begins

Wednesday, October 04, 2006

GRAND RAPIDS -- Jury selection began Tuesday in the trial of a Honduran native accused of killing a 28-year-old woman and her unborn baby, then attacking her husband when he got home. Edwin Lario-Munoz is charged with open murder of Silvia Sanchez-Parada, who was seven months pregnant when killed Oct. 14, 2005, in her home at 848 Baxter St. SE. The suspect, once featured on the cover of Parade magazine for a story about orphaned immigrant children, was living in a rented room at the house. After he strangled the woman, he attacked her husband, Leoncio Garcia-Lopez, with a, police say.

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Many children don't get annual flu shots

10/4/2006, 12:42 p.m. ET

By KEVIN FREKING
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Only about half of young children who are supposed to get annual flu shots have been doing so, a percentage that drops to less than a third when it comes to children with chronic medical conditions such as asthma and heart disease.

And, with medical experts expanding the age range of children who should be vaccinated this year, the percentage who fail to comply with the recommendations is likely to go up. Health officials now say children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years should get flu shots; previously the range was 6 months to 2 years.

Many parents may not be aware of the change.

Health officials with the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases say Americans don't take flu seriously enough. This year, a vaccine shortage won't be a credible excuse. More than 100 million doses of vaccine will be available — the most ever.

"Vaccine that remains in the refrigerator cannot prevent influenza," said Dr. William Schaffner, a professor at Vanderbilt University.

The stakes are high when it comes to the flu, said officials who attended a press conference designed to raise awareness of flu shot recommendations. The flu kills about 36,000 people each year and puts more than 200,000 others in the hospital. Most of the deaths and serious cases are among the elderly.

Still, for children between the ages of 2 and 5, there is a higher rate of clinic and emergency room visits due to flu-related illness than with other illnesses.

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Published October 4, 2006

Ingham to spend \$6M to better help kids

Families will get support to keep children at home

By Nicole Geary
Lansing State Journal

Ingham County is using a \$6 million grant to improve its support network for children struggling with serious behavior and emotional problems.

The Impact System of Care project aims to help those kids thrive at home - without needing detention, residential treatment or foster care - by better coordinating local services for families.

Ten partners that oversee counseling, probation, education and more kicked off the initiative Tuesday at Lansing's Otto Middle School. Ingham County was one of 25 communities nationwide to receive the federal funding last fall. The only other Michigan community was Kalamazoo.

"Go anywhere else in the state, and you will not find this level of collaboration," said Matt Wojack, Impact's project director.

Typically, providers such as juvenile court officers and mental health therapists find ways to work together.

Still, "many (families) go unserved or underserved," Wojack said. "They need a system that is ready to respond."

So, after spending the first year in planning, local leaders say the revamped system is ready to serve 100 to 200 children diagnosed with severe emotional disturbance, or SED, and their families during the coming year. Each family will receive a case manager to coordinate needs and a family

Who's involved

Here are the Impact System of Care project partners:

- Association for Children's Mental Health, www.acmh-mi.org
- Capital Area United Way, www.capitalareaunitedway.org
- Child and Family Services, Capital Area, www.childandfamily.org
- Community Mental Health Authority of Clinton-Eaton-Ingham Counties, www.ceicmh.org
- Ingham County Department of Human Services, www.michigan.gov/dhs
- Ingham County Board of Commissioners, www.ingham.org
- Ingham County Circuit Court, Family Division, www.ingham.org/cc/circuit.htm
- Ingham Intermediate School District, www.inghamisd.org
- Lansing School District, lansingschools.net
- St. Vincent Catholic Charities, www.stvcc.org

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advocate.

The system also assumes a revised set of values and goals, such as tailoring solutions to individual situations and making sure services are "done with" the family rather than "done to." The targeted kids, ages 6-17, often act destructively because they can't cope at school, at home or in the community.

"These are not kids who are going to get invited to birthday parties. ... They really have a difficult time fitting in," said Malisa Pearson, a family coordinator with the Association for Children's Mental Health. She said her child faced similar issues.

The grant will provide about \$1 million annually for the next five years, at which time the system should be self-sustaining. Other grant money was used in the start-up of the program.

"This really elevates the role of families to be equal players and partners," Pearson said.

"Ultimately, we'll see less kids go into placement, we'll see families stay together and we'll see better outcomes for children."

Contact Nicole Geary at 377-1066 or ngeary@lsj.com.

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Program will assist Comstock Park students in need

, , 20

By CHRIS HECOX

A collaboration between the Kent Intermediate School District and several local health and human services agencies will benefit Comstock Park Public Schools students.

The Kent School Services Network aims to identify social, physical and mental-health problems preventing students from succeeding and provide the necessary resources to alleviate the problem.

Ron Koehler, Kent Intermediate School District assistant superintendent of organization and community initiative, said as part of the program three new staff members will be added to the staff at Comstock Park Schools: a "resource connector," a Spectrum Health Nurse and Department of Human Services worker.

"The resource connector will take a look at what the needs might be mental health services, transportation or food, for example and identify services available in the community and connect the family to them," Koehler said.

Whenever possible, services will be provided at the school, Koehler said.

The resource connector will also follow up with students and families to ensure they are utilizing the resource available to them.

To determine which students may be in need of assistance from the program, the resource connector work closely with school staff to evaluate student performance.

"Three or more absences may trigger some kind of discussion amongst school staff and the resource connector," Koehler said. "It's really our hope that in a lot of instances school staff will sense a problem runs deeper."

KISD launched a three-year pilot of the program at Comstock Park Public Schools, Godfrey Lee Early Childhood Center, and six Grand Rapids Pubic Schools this school year.

Though Comstock Park Schools has fewer students receiving free and reduced lunch a statistics used to determine the need for the program at specific schools Koehler said KISD officials believed it was important to include a suburban district, like Comstock Park, in the pilot program.

"What we we're looking at is the opportunity to see how the program can meet the needs of students in different settings," he said.

Comstock Park school officials are pleased with that decision.

"We're looking forward to having services here to help improve students' learning," said Comstock Park Board of Education President Terry Benjamin.

Nearly two-years in the making, the Kent School Services Network pilot launched, in part, thanks to a \$486,000 donation from the Grand Rapids Community Foundation.

In all, the program is about making it easier for students to achieve in the classroom, Koehler said.

"We want to help the students become ready to learn and hopefully experience a higher level of student achievement," Koehler said.



Welfare drug tests: Solid theory, and ...

Wednesday, October 04, 2006

How accountable should people on welfare be to the taxpayers who assist them in their need? Should they be drug-free? In theory, yes -- which is why a bill that passed in the House is fundamentally a sound welfare strategy.

It does, however, have implications that may taunt the best intentions. Under this legislation, sponsored by Rep. Leslie Mortimer, R-Horton, welfare recipients suspected of drug use could be tested -- if a Department of Human Services employee has a reasonable suspicion.

If the person tests positive, he or she would have to enter a treatment program. Failing to follow through could eventually result in the loss of benefits.

House Republicans have been pushing this, and just before breaking for the campaign season, the House passed the measure 82-25. Some Democrats supported it, for it is difficult to argue against such a common-sense proposal.

So what problems might crop up with a law that simply attempts to make sure that people on welfare are not engaged in drug abuse?

There is, of course, the relatively minor problems that go with all testing for drugs. The tests can be wrong. The more serious issue follows the scenario of one who is tested and found -- correctly -- to have used illicit drugs. This is kind of a parallel track with many who are actually charged with alcohol or drug abuse in the criminal system. The idealist in all these cases demands treatment, not punishment. After all, drug use is more a personal weakness than a deliberate violation of law.

In the case of people receiving welfare who test positive, are there enough treatment programs to handle the referrals? Who will pay? The tests alone cost \$750 each.

It sounds wise for the state to identify people with a drug problem and get help for them. But with state resources stretched so thin these days, let's make sure this is affordable before jumping into it.

We hope the Senate, which will take up the measure after the election, focuses on the cost of this bill before finalizing it as public policy.

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Muskegon Chronicle

State officials here today for Cities of Promise tour

Tuesday, October 03, 2006

FROM LOCAL REPORTS

Several state officials were expected to visit sites in Muskegon Heights today as part of Gov. Jennifer Granholm's Cities of Promise initiative.

The initiative is designed to promote close cooperation between state and local officials to help the eight Michigan cities with the highest poverty rates.

The other cities included in the initiative are Detroit, Highland Park, Hamtramck, Flint, Saginaw, Pontiac and Benton Harbor.

Today's tour was scheduled to begin at 10:30 a.m. at Muskegon Heights Middle School. Scheduled stops included the Muskegon Heights Family Resource Center at the city's Lindbergh Elementary School.

Plans also included a roundtable discussion to be conducted by Marianne Udow, director of the state's Department of Human Services.

The tour was to conclude with a visit to the site of planned residential development at the city's former wastewater treatment plant.

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